

Trump, Israel & The Number 7 - Why Was Donald Trump Elected?

See some amazing signs that link Donald Trump to Israel and more. stevemoxham.com



Veneration of Images

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The First Commandment would seem absolutely to forbid the making of any kind of representation of men, animals, or even plants:

“Thou shalt not have strange gods before me. Thou shalt not make to thyself a graven thing, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven (../cathen/07170a.htm) above, or in the earth beneath, nor of those things that are in the waters under the earth. Thou shalt not adore them, nor serve them (Exodus 20:3-5 (../bible/exo020.htm#vrs3)). ”

It is of course obvious that the emphasis of this law (../cathen/09053a.htm) is in the first and last clauses — "no strange gods", "thou shalt not adore them". Still any one who reads it might see in the other words too an absolute command. The people are not only told not to adore images nor serve them; they are not even to make any graven thing or the likeness, it would seem, of anything at all. One could understand so far-reaching a command at that time. If they made statues (../cathen/13641b.htm) or pictures, they probably would end by adoring them. How likely they were to set up a graven thing as a strange god is shown by the story of the golden calf (../cathen/06628b.htm) at the very time that the ten words were promulgated (../cathen/12454b.htm). In distinction to the nations around, Israel (../cathen/08193a.htm) was to worship an unseen God (../cathen/06608a.htm), there was to be no danger of the Israelites (../cathen/08193a.htm) falling into the kind of religion of Egypt (../cathen/05329b.htm) or Babylon. This law obtained certainly as far as images of God

(../cathen/06608a.htm) are concerned. Any attempt to represent the God (../cathen/06608a.htm) of Israel (../cathen/08193a.htm) graphically (it seems that the golden calf (../cathen/06628b.htm) had this meaning — Exodus 32:5 (../bible/exo032.htm#vrs5)) is always put down as being abominable idolatry (../cathen/07636a.htm).

But, except for one late period, we notice that the commandment was never understood as an absolute and universal prohibition of any kind of image. Throughout the Old Testament (../cathen/14526a.htm) there are instances of representations of living things, not in any way worshipped, but used lawfully, even ordered by the law (../cathen/09053a.htm) as ornaments of the tabernacle and temple. The many cases of idolatry (../cathen/07636a.htm) and various deflections from the Law which the prophets (../cathen/12477a.htm) denounce are not, of course, cases in point. It is the statues (../cathen/13641b.htm) made and used with the full approval of the authorities which show that the words, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image", were not understood absolutely and literally. It may be that the Hebrew (../cathen/07176a.htm) translated "graven image" had a technical sense that meant more than a statue (../cathen/13641b.htm), and included the idea (../cathen/07630a.htm) of "idol"; though this does not explain the difficulty of the next phrase. In any case it is certain (../cathen/03539b.htm) that there were "likenesses of that which is in the sky above and on earth below and in the waters" in the orthodox (../cathen/11330a.htm) Jewish cult. Whatever one may understand the mysterious ephod (../cathen/05497a.htm) and theraphim to have been, there was the brazen serpent (Numbers 21:9 (../bible/num021.htm#vrs9)), not destroyed till Ezechias did so (2 Kings 18:4 (../bible/2ki018.htm#vrs4)), there were carved and moulded garlands of fruit and flowers and trees (Numbers 8:4 (../bible/num008.htm#vrs4); 1 Kings 6:18 (../bible/1ki006.htm#vrs18); 7:36 (../bible/1ki007.htm#vrs36)); the king's throne rested on carved lions (1 Kings 10:19-20 (../bible/1ki010.htm#vrs19)), lions and bulls supported the basins in the temple (1 Kings 7:25, 29 (../bible/1ki007.htm#vrs25)). Especially there are the cherubim (../cathen/03646c.htm), great carved figures of beasts (Ezekiel 1:5 (../bible/eze001.htm#vrs5); 10:20 (../bible/eze010.htm#vrs20), where they are called beasts), that stood over the ark of the covenant (../cathen/01721a.htm) (Exodus 25:18-22 (../bible/exo025.htm#vrs18); 1 Kings 6:23-8 (../bible/1ki006.htm#vrs23); 8:6-7 (../bible/1ki008.htm#vrs6), etc.). But, except for the human heads of the cherubim (../cathen/03646c.htm) (Ezekiel 41:19 (../bible/eze041.htm#vrs19), Exodus 25:20 (../bible/exo025.htm#vrs20), the references to them when combined seem to point irresistibly to some such figures as the Assyrian winged bulls with human heads), we read nothing of statues (../cathen/13641b.htm) of men in the lawful cult of the Old Testament (../cathen/14526a.htm). In this point at least the Jew (../cathen/08399a.htm) seems to have understood the commandment to forbid the making of such statues (../cathen/13641b.htm), though even this is not clear in the earlier periods. The ephod (../cathen/05497a.htm) was certainly once a statue (../cathen/13641b.htm) of human form (Judges 8:27 (../bible/jdg008.htm#vrs27); 17:5 (../bible/jdg017.htm#vrs5); 1 Samuel 19:13 (../bible/1sa019.htm#vrs13), etc.), and what were the theraphim (Judges 17:5 (../bible/jdg017.htm#vrs5))? Both were used in orthodox (../cathen/11330a.htm) worship.

During the Machabean (../cathen/09493b.htm) period, however, there was a strong feeling against any kind of representation of living things. Josephus (../cathen/08522a.htm) tells the story of Herod the Great (../cathen/07289c.htm): "Certain things were done by Herod (../cathen/07289c.htm) against the law (../cathen/09053a.htm) for which he was accused by Judas and Matthias. For the king made and set up over the great gate of the temple a sacred and very precious great golden eagle. But it is forbidden in the law (../cathen/09053a.htm) to those who wish to live according to its precepts (../cathen/12372b.htm) to

think of setting up images, or to assist any one to consecrate ([../cathen/04276a.htm](#)) figures of living things. Therefore those wise men ordered the eagle to be destroyed" ("Antiq. Jud.", 1. XVII, c. vi, 2). So also in "De bello Jud.", 1. I, c. xxxiii (xxi), 2, he says: "It is unlawful to have in the temple images or pictures or any representation of a living thing", and in his "Life": "that I might persuade them to destroy utterly the house built by Herod the tetrarch ([../cathen/07289c.htm](#)), because it had images of living things (*soon morphas*) since our laws ([../cathen/09053a.htm](#)) forbid us to make such things" (Jos. vita, 12). The Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) at the risk of their lives persuaded Pilate ([../cathen/12083c.htm](#)) to remove the statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of Caesar set up among the standards of the army in Jerusalem ([../cathen/08344a.htm](#)) ["Ant. Jud.", 1. XVIII, c. iii (iv), 1, De bell. Jud., ix (xiv), 2-3]; they implored Vitellius not even to carry such statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) through their land [*ibid.*, c. v (vii), 3]. It is well known how fiercely they resisted various attempts to set up idols of false ([../cathen/05781a.htm](#)) gods in the temple (see JERUSALEM ([../cathen/08344a.htm](#)), II); though this would be an abomination to them even apart from their general horror of images of any kind. So it became the general conviction that Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) abhor any kind of statue ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) or image. Tacitus says: "The Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) worship one God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) in their minds only. They hold those to be profane who make images of the gods with corruptible materials in the likeness of man, for he is supreme and eternal, neither changeable nor mortal. Therefore they allow no images (*simulacra*) in their cities or temples ([../cathen/14495a.htm](#))" (Hist., V, iv).

It is this uncompromising attitude in the late Jewish history, together with the apparently obvious meaning of the First Commandment, that are responsible for the common idea ([../cathen/07630a.htm](#)) that Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) had no images. We have seen that this idea ([../cathen/07630a.htm](#)) must be modified for earlier ages. Nor does it by any means obtain as a universal principle in later times. In spite of the iconoclastic ideas ([../cathen/07630a.htm](#)) of the Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) of Palestine described by Josephus ([../cathen/08522a.htm](#)), in spite of their horror of anything of the nature of an idol in their temple, Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)), especially in the Diaspora ([../cathen/04775c.htm](#)), made no difficulty about embellishing their monuments with paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) even of the human form. There are a number of Jewish catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) and cemeteries decorated with paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) representing birds, beasts, fishes, men, and women ([../cathen/15687b.htm](#)). At Gamart, North of Carthage, is one whose tombs ([../cathen/14773b.htm](#)) are adorned with carved ornaments of garlands and human figures; in one of the caves are pictures of a horseman and of another person ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) holding a whip under a tree, another at Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)) in the Vigna Randanini by the Appian Way has a painted ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) ceiling of birds, fishes, and little winged human figures around a centerpiece representing a woman ([../cathen/15687b.htm](#)), evidently a Victory, crowning a small figure. At Palmyra is a Jewish funeral chamber painted ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) throughout with winged female ([../cathen/15687b.htm](#)) figures holding up round portraits, above is a picture, quite in the late Roman style, of Achilles and the daughters of Lycomedes (d. 515). Many other examples of carved figures on sarcophagi, wall paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)), and geometrical ornaments, all in the manner of Pompeian decoration and the Christian catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)), but from Jewish cemeteries, show that, in spite of their exclusive religion, the Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) in the first Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) centuries had submitted to the artistic influence of their Roman neighbours. So that in this matter when Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) began to decorate their catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) with holy pictures they did not thereby sever themselves from the custom of their Jewish forefathers.

Christian images before the eighth century

Two questions that obviously must be kept apart are those of the use of sacred images and of the reverence paid to them. That Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) from the very beginning adorned their catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) with paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), of the saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)), of scenes from the Bible ([../bible](#)) and allegorical groups is too obvious and too well known for it to be necessary ([../cathen/10733a.htm](#)) to insist upon the fact. The catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) are the cradle of all Christian art ([../cathen/03710a.htm](#)). Since their discovery in the sixteenth century — on 31 May, 1578, an accident revealed part of the catacomb ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) in the Via Salaria — and the investigation of their contents that has gone on steadily ever since, we are able to reconstruct an exact idea ([../cathen/07630a.htm](#)) of the paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) that adorned them. That the first Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) had any sort of prejudice against images, pictures, or statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) is a myth (defended amongst others by Erasmus ([../cathen/05510b.htm](#))) that has been abundantly dispelled by all students of Christian archaeology ([../cathen/03705a.htm](#)). The idea ([../cathen/07630a.htm](#)) that they must have feared the danger of idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)) among their new converts is disproved in the simplest way by the pictures even statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)), that remain from the first centuries. Even the Jewish Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) had no reason to be prejudiced against pictures, as we have seen; still less had the Gentile ([../cathen/06422a.htm](#)) communities any such feeling. They accepted the art of their time and used it, as well as a poor and persecuted ([../cathen/11703a.htm](#)) community could, to express their religious ideas ([../cathen/07630a.htm](#)). Roman pagan ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)) cemeteries and Jewish catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) already showed the way; Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) followed these examples with natural modifications. From the second half of the first century to the time of Constantine they buried their dead and celebrated their rites in these underground chambers. The old pagan ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)) sarcophagi had been carved with figures of gods, garlands of flowers, and symbolic ornament; pagan ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)) cemeteries, rooms, and temples ([../cathen/14495a.htm](#)) had been painted ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) with scenes from mythology. The Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) sarcophagi were ornamented with indifferent or symbolic designs — palms, peacocks, vines, with the chi-rho monogram (long before Constantine), with bas-reliefs ([../cathen/02341a.htm](#)) of Christ as the Good Shepherd, or seated between figures of saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)), and sometimes, as in the famous one of Julius Bassus with elaborate scenes from the New Testament ([../cathen/14530a.htm](#)). And the catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) were covered with paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)). There are other decorations such as garlands, ribands, stars landscapes, vines-no doubt ([../cathen/05141a.htm](#)) in many cases having a symbolic meaning.

One sees with some surprise motives from mythology now employed in a Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) sense (Psyche, Eros winged Victories, Orpheus), and evidently used as a type of our Lord. Certain scenes from the Old Testament ([../cathen/14526a.htm](#)) that have an evident application to His life and Church recur constantly: Daniel in the lions' den, Noah ([../cathen/11088a.htm](#)) and his ark, Samson carrying away the gates Jonas, Moses striking the rock. Scenes from the New Testament ([../cathen/14530a.htm](#)) are very common too, the Nativity and arrival of the Wise Men, our Lord's baptism ([../cathen/02258b.htm](#)), the miracle ([../cathen/10338a.htm](#)) of the loaves and fishes, the marriage feast at Cana, Lazarus ([../cathen/09096a.htm](#)), and Christ

teaching the Apostles ([../cathen/01626c.htm](#)). There are also purely typical figures, the woman ([../cathen/15687b.htm](#)) praying ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)) with uplifted hands representing the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), harts drinking from a fountain that springs from a chi-rho monogram, and sheep. And there are especially pictures of Christ as the Good Shepherd, as lawgiver, as a child in His mother's arms, of His head alone in a circle, of our Lady alone, of St. Peter and St. Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) — pictures that are not scenes of historic events, but, like the statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) in our modern churches, just memorials of Christ and His saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)). In the catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) there is little that can be described as sculpture ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)); there are few statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) for a very simple reason. Statues are much more difficult to make, and cost much more than wall-paintings. But there was no principle against them. Eusebius ([../cathen/05617b.htm](#)) describes very ancient statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) at Caesarea Philippi ([../cathen/03135a.htm](#)) representing Christ and the woman ([../cathen/15687b.htm](#)) He healed there (*Church History* VII.18 ([../fathers/250107.htm](#)); Matthew 9:20-2 ([../bible/mat009.htm#vrs20](#))). The earliest sarcophagi had bas-reliefs ([../cathen/02341a.htm](#)). As soon as the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) came out of the catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)), became richer, had no fear of persecution ([../cathen/11703a.htm](#)), the same people who had painted ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) their caves began to make statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of the same subjects. The famous statue ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of the Good Shepherd in the Lateran Museum was made as early as the beginning of the third century, the statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of Hippolytus ([../cathen/07360c.htm](#)) and of St. Peter date from the end of the same century. The principle was quite simple. The first Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) were accustomed to see statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of emperors, of pagan ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)) gods and heroes, as well as pagan ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)) wall-paintings. So they made paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) of their religion, and, as soon as they could afford them, statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of their Lord and of their heroes, without the remotest fear or suspicion of idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)).

The idea ([../cathen/07630a.htm](#)) that the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) of the first centuries was in any way prejudiced against pictures and statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) is the most impossible fiction. After Constantine (306-37) there was of course an enormous development of every kind. Instead of burrowing catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) began to build splendid basilicas ([../cathen/02325a.htm](#)). They adorned them with costly mosaics ([../cathen/10584a.htm](#)), carving, and statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)). But there was no new principle. The mosaics ([../cathen/10584a.htm](#)) represented more artistically and richly the motives that had been painted ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) on the walls of the old caves, the larger statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) continue the tradition begun by carved sarcophagi and little lead and glass ornaments. From that time to the Iconoclast Persecution ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)) holy images ([../cathen/07625a.htm](#)) are in possession all over the Christian world ([../cathen/03699b.htm](#)). St. Ambrose ([../cathen/01383c.htm](#)) (d. 397) describes in a letter how St. Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)) appeared to him one night, and he recognized him by the likeness to his pictures (Ep. ii, in P.L., XVII, 821). St. Augustine ([../cathen/02084a.htm](#)) (d. 430) refers several times to pictures of our Lord and the saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) in churches (e.g. "De cons. Evang.", x in P.L., XXXIV, 1049; *Reply to Faustus* XXII.73 ([../fathers/140622.htm](#))); he says that some people even adore them ("De mor. eccl. cath.", xxxiv, P.L., XXXII, 1342). St. Jerome ([../cathen/08341a.htm](#)) (d. 420) also writes of pictures of the Apostles as well-known ornaments of churches (In Ionam, iv). St. Paulinus of Nola ([../cathen/11585b.htm](#)) (d. 431) paid for mosaics ([../cathen/10584a.htm](#)) representing Biblical scenes and saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) in the churches of his city, and then wrote a poem describing them (P.L., LXI, 884). Gregory of Tours ([../cathen/07018b.htm](#)) (d. 594) says that a Frankish ([../cathen/06238a.htm](#)) lady, who built a church ([../cathen/02781a.htm](#)) of St. Stephen, showed the artists

who painted ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) its walls how they should represent the saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) out of a book (Hist. Franc., II, 17, P.L., LXXI, 215). In the East St. Basil ([../cathen/02330b.htm](#)) (d. 379), preaching about St. Barlaam, calls upon painters ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) to do the saint ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) more honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) by making pictures of him than he himself can do by words ("Or. in S. Barlaam", in P.G., XXXI). St. Nilus ([../cathen/11079b.htm](#)) in the fifth century blames a friend for wishing to decorate a church with profane ornaments, and exhorts him to replace these by scenes from Scripture (Epist. IV, 56). St. Cyril of Alexandria ([../cathen/04592b.htm](#)) (d. 444) was so great a defender of icons that his opponents accused him of idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)) (for all this see Schwarzlose, "Der Bilderstreit" i, 3-15). St. Gregory the Great ([../cathen/06780a.htm](#)) (d. 604) was always a great defender of holy pictures (see below).

We notice, however, in the first centuries a certain reluctance to express the pain and humiliation of the Passion of Christ. Whether to spare the susceptibility of new converts, or as a natural reaction from the condition of a persecuted ([../cathen/11703a.htm](#)) sect ([../cathen/13674a.htm](#)), Christ is generally represented as splendid and triumphant. There are pictures of His Passion ([../cathen/11527b.htm](#)) even in the catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) (e.g., the crowning of thorns in the Catacomb ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) of Praetextatus on the Appian way) but the favourite representation is either the Good Shepherd (by far the most frequent) or Christ showing His power, raising Lazarus, working some other miracle ([../cathen/10338a.htm](#)), standing among His Apostles ([../cathen/01626c.htm](#)), seated in glory. There are no pictures of the Crucifixion except the mock-crucifix scratched by some pagan ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)) soldier in the Palatine barracks. In the first basilicas ([../cathen/02325a.htm](#)) also the type of the triumphant Christ remains the normal one. The curve of the apse ([../cathen/01659a.htm](#)) (*concha*) over the altar is regularly filled with a mosaic ([../cathen/10584a.htm](#)) representing the reign of Christ in some symbolic group. Our Lord ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)) sits on a throne, dressed in the *tunica talaris* and pallium ([../cathen/11427a.htm](#)), holding a book in His left hand, with the right lifted up. This is the type that is found in countless basilicas ([../cathen/02325a.htm](#)) in East and West from the fourth century to the seventh. The group around him varies. Sometimes it is saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)), apostles or angels ([../cathen/01476d.htm](#)) (St. Pudentiana, Sts. Cosmas and Damian, St. Paul ([../cathen/13369a.htm](#)) at Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)), St. Vitalis ([../cathen/15486a.htm](#)), St. Michael); often on either side of Christ are purely symbolic figures, lambs, harts, palms, cities, the symbols of the evangelists (S. Apollinare in Classe; the chapel ([../cathen/03574b.htm](#)) of Galla Placidia at Ravenna ([../cathen/12662b.htm](#))). A typical example of this tradition was the concha-mosaic of old St. Peter's at Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)) (destroyed in the sixteenth century). Here Christ is enthroned ([../cathen/05479c.htm](#)) in the centre in the usual form, bearded ([../cathen/02362a.htm](#)), with a nimbus, in tunic and pallium ([../cathen/11427a.htm](#)), holding a book in the left hand, blessing with the right. Under His feet four streams arise (the rivers of Eden ([../cathen/14519a.htm](#)), Genesis 2:10 ([../bible/gen002.htm#vrs10](#))) from which two stags drink (Ps. xli, 2). On either side of Christ are St. Peter and St. Paul ([../cathen/11567b.htm](#)), beyond each a palm tree; the background is sprinkled with stars while above rays of light and a hand issuing from under a small cross suggest God the Father ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)). Below is a frieze in which lambs come out from little cities at either end (marked Hierusalem and Betliem) towards an Agnus Dei on a hill, from which again flow four streams. Behind the Agnus Dei is a throne with a cross, behind the lambs is a row of trees. Figures of a pope ([../cathen/12260a.htm](#)) (Innocent III ([../cathen/08013a.htm](#)), 1198-1216) and an emperor preceding the processions of lambs were added later; but the essential plan of this mosaic ([../cathen/10584a.htm](#)) (often restored) dates from the fourth century.

Although representations of the Crucifixion do not occur till later, the cross, as the symbol of Christianity ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)), dates from the very beginning. Justin Martyr ([../cathen/08580c.htm](#)) (d. 165) describes it in a way that already implies its use as a symbol (*Dialogue with Trypho* 91 ([../fathers/01287.htm](#))). He says that the cross is providentially represented in every kind of natural object: the sails of a ship, a plough, tools, even the human body (Apol. I, 55). According to Tertullian ([../cathen/14520c.htm](#)) (d. about 240), Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) were known as "worshippers of the cross" (Apol., xv). Both simple crosses and the chi-rho monogram are common ornaments of catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)); combined with palm branches, lambs and other symbols they form an obvious symbol of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)). After Constantine the cross, made splendid with gold and gems, was set up triumphantly as the standard of the conquering Faith. A late catacomb ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) painting ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) represents a cross richly jewelled and adorned with flowers. Constantine's Labarum ([../cathen/08717c.htm](#)) at the battle of the Milvian Bridge (312), and the story of the finding of the True Cross ([../cathen/04529a.htm](#)) by St. Helen, gave a fresh impulse to its worship. It appears (without a figure) above the image of Christ in the apsidal mosaic ([../cathen/10584a.htm](#)) of St. Pudentiana at Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)), in His nimbus constantly, in some prominent place on an altar or throne (as the symbol of Christ), in nearly all mosaics ([../cathen/10584a.htm](#)) above the apse ([../cathen/01659a.htm](#)) or in the chief place of the first basilicas ([../cathen/02325a.htm](#)) (St. Paul ([../cathen/13369a.htm](#)) at Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)), *ibid.*, 183, St. Vitalis ([../cathen/15486a.htm](#)) at Ravenna ([../cathen/12662b.htm](#))). In Galla Placidia's chapel ([../cathen/03574b.htm](#)) at Ravenna ([../cathen/12662b.htm](#)) Christ (as the Good Shepherd with His sheep) holds a great cross in His left hand. The cross had a special place as an object of worship. It was the chief outward sign of the Faith, was treated with more reverence than any picture "worship of the cross" (*staurolatreia*) was a special thing distinct from image-worship, so that we find the milder Iconoclasts ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)) in after years making an exception for the cross, still treating it with reverence, while they destroyed pictures. A common argument of the imageworshippers to their opponents was that since the latter too worshipped the cross they were inconsistent in refusing to worship other images (see *ICONOCLASM* ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#))).

The cross further gained an important place in the consciousness of Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) from its use in ritual functions. To make the sign of the cross ([../cathen/13785a.htm](#)) with the hand soon became the common form of professing the Faith or invoking a blessing. The Canons of Hippolytus ([../cathen/07360c.htm](#)) tell the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)): "Sign thy forehead with the sign of the cross ([../cathen/13785a.htm](#)) in order to defeat Satan ([../cathen/04764a.htm](#)) and to glory in thy Faith" (c. xxix; cf. Tertullian ([../cathen/14520c.htm](#)), "Adv. Marc.", III, 22). People prayed ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)) with extended arms to represent a cross (Origen ([../cathen/11306b.htm](#)), "Hom. in Exod.", iii, 3, Tertullian ([../cathen/14520c.htm](#)), "de Orat.", 14). So also to make the sign of the cross ([../cathen/13785a.htm](#)) over a person ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) or thing became the usual gesture of blessing, consecrating, exorcising ([../cathen/05709a.htm](#)) (Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* IV:27 ([../fathers/07014.htm#27](#))), actual material crosses adorned the vessels used in the Liturgy, a cross was brought in procession and placed on the altar during Mass. The First Roman Ordo (sixth century) alludes to the cross-bearers (*cruces portantes*) in a procession. As soon as people began to represent scenes from the Passion they naturally included the chief event, and so we have the earliest pictures and carvings of the Crucifixion. The first mentions of crucifixes are in the sixth century. A traveller in the reign of Justinian notices one he saw in a church at Gaza ([../cathen/06399c.htm](#)) in the West, Venantius Fortunatus ([../cathen/06149a.htm](#)) saw a palla embroidered ([../cathen/05400a.htm](#)) with a picture of the Crucifixion at Tours ([../cathen/15002a.htm](#)), and Gregory of Tours ([../cathen/07018b.htm](#)) refers to a crucifix at Narbonne. For a long time Christ on the cross

was always represented alive. The oldest crucifixes known are those on the wooden doors of St. Sabina ([../cathen/13290a.htm](#)) at Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)) and an ivory ([../cathen/08257b.htm](#)) carving in the British Museum. Both are of the fifth century. A Syriac manuscript ([../cathen/09614b.htm](#)) of the sixth century contains a miniature representing the scene of the crucifixion. There are other such representations down to the seventh century, after which it becomes the usual custom to add the figure of our Lord to crosses; the crucifix is in possession everywhere.

The conclusion then is that the principle of adorning chapels ([../cathen/03574b.htm](#)) and churches with pictures dates from the very earliest Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) times: centuries before the Iconoclast troubles ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)) they were in use throughout Christendom ([../cathen/03699b.htm](#)). So also all the old Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) Churches in East and West use holy pictures constantly. The only difference is that even before Iconoclasm ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)) there was in the East a certain prejudice against solid statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)). This has been accentuated since the time of the Iconoclast heresy ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)) (see below, section 5). But there are traces of it before; it is shared by the old schismatical ([../cathen/13529a.htm](#)) (Nestorian ([../cathen/10755a.htm](#)) and Monophysite ([../cathen/10489b.htm](#)) Churches that broke away long before Iconoclasm ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)). The principle in the East was not universally accepted. The emperors set up their statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) at Constantinople without blame; statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of religious purpose existed in the East before the eighth century (see for instance the marble Good Shepherds from Thrace, Athens ([../cathen/02046a.htm](#)), and Sparta ([../cathen/14209b.htm](#)), the Madonna and Child from Saloniki, but they are much rarer than in the West. Images in the East were generally flat; paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)), mosaics ([../cathen/10584a.htm](#)), bas-reliefs ([../cathen/02341a.htm](#)). The most zealous ([../cathen/15753a.htm](#)) Eastern defenders of the holy icons seem to have felt that, however justifiable such flat representations may be, there is something about a solid statue ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) that makes it suspiciously like an idol.

The veneration of images

Distinct from the admission of images is the question of the way they are treated. What signs of reverence, if any, did the first Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) give to the images in their catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) and churches? For the first period we have no information. There are so few references to images at all in the earliest Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) literature that we should hardly have suspected their ubiquitous presence were they not actually there in the catacombs ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) as the most convincing argument. But these catacomb ([../cathen/03417b.htm](#)) paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) tell us nothing about how they were treated. We may take it for granted, on the one hand, that the first Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) understood quite well that paintings ([../cathen/11395a.htm](#)) may not have any share in the adoration due to God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) alone. Their monotheism ([../cathen/10499a.htm](#)), their insistence on the fact that they serve only one almighty ([../cathen/11251c.htm](#)) unseen God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)), their horror of the idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)) of their neighbours, the torture and death that their martyrs ([../cathen/09736b.htm](#)) suffered rather than lay a grain of incense ([../cathen/07716a.htm](#)) before the statue ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of the emperor's numen are enough to convince us that they were not setting up rows of idols of their own. On the other hand, the place of honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) they give to their symbols and pictures,

the care with which they decorate them argue that they treated representations of their most sacred beliefs ([../cathen/02408b.htm](#)) with at least decent reverence. It is from this reverence that the whole tradition of venerating holy images ([../cathen/07625a.htm](#)) gradually and naturally developed. After the time of Constantine it is still mainly by conjecture that we are able to deduce the way these images were treated. The etiquette of the Byzantine ([../cathen/03096a.htm](#)) court gradually evolved elaborate forms of respect, not only for the person ([../cathen/11726a.htm](#)) of Caesar but even for his statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) and symbols. Philostorgius (who was an Iconoclast ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)) long before the eighth century) says that in the fourth century the Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) Roman citizens in the East offered gifts, incense ([../cathen/07716a.htm](#)), and even prayers ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)), to the statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of the emperor (Hist. eccl., II, 17). It would be natural that people who bowed to, kissed ([../cathen/08663a.htm](#)), incensed ([../cathen/07716a.htm](#)) the imperial eagles and images of Caesar (with no suspicion of anything like idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#))), who paid elaborate reverence to an empty throne as his symbol, should give the same signs to the cross, the images of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), and the altar. So in the first Byzantine centuries there grew up traditions of respect that gradually became fixed, as does all ceremonial. Such practices spread in some measure to Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)) and the West, but their home was the Court at Constantinople. Long afterwards the Frankish ([../cathen/06238a.htm](#)) bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)) in the eighth century were still unable to understand forms that in the East were natural and obvious, but to Germans seemed degrading and servile (Synod of Frankfort ([../cathen/06237a.htm](#)), 794; see ICONOCLASM ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)) IV). It is significant too that, although Rome ([../cathen/13164a.htm](#)) and Constantinople agree entirely as to the principle of honouring holy images ([../cathen/07625a.htm](#)) with signs of reverence, the descendants of the subjects of the Eastern emperor still go far beyond us in the use of such signs.

The development was then a question of genera fashion rather than of principle. To the Byzantine Christian ([../cathen/05230a.htm](#)) of the fifth and sixth centuries prostrations, kisses ([../cathen/08663a.htm](#)), incense ([../cathen/07716a.htm](#)) were the natural ways of showing honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) to any one; he was used to such things, even applied to his civil and social superiors; he was accustomed to treat symbols in the same way, giving them relative honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) that was obviously meant really for their prototypes. And so he carried his normal habits with him into church. Tradition, the conservative instinct ([../cathen/08050b.htm](#)) that in ecclesiastical ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) matters always insists or custom, gradually stereotyped such practices till they were written down as rubrics ([../cathen/13216a.htm](#)) and became part of the ritual. Nor is there any suspicion that the people who were unconsciously evolving this ritual, confused the image with its prototype or forgot that to God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) only supreme homage is due. The forms they used were as natural to them as saluting a flag is to us.

At the same time one must admit that just before the Iconoclast ([../cathen/07620a.htm](#)) outbreak things had gone very far in the direction of image-worship. Even then it is inconceivable that any one, except perhaps the most grossly stupid peasant, could have thought that an image could hear prayers ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)), or do anything for us. And yet the way in which some people treated their holy icons argues more than the merely relative honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) that Catholics ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) are taught to observe towards them. In the first place images had multiplied to an enormous extent everywhere, the walls of churches were covered inside from floor to roof with icons, scenes from the Bible ([../bible/](#)), allegorical groups. (An example of

this is S. Maria Antiqua, built in the seventh century in the Roman Forum, with its systematic arrangement of paintings (../cathen/11395a.htm) covering the whole church. Icons, especially in the East, were taken on journeys as a protection, they marched at the head of armies, and presided at the races in the hippodrome; they hung in a place of honour (../cathen/07462a.htm) in every room, over every shop; they covered cups, garments, furniture, rings; wherever a possible space was found, it was filled with a picture of Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), our Lady, or a saint. It is difficult to understand exactly what those Byzantine Christians (../cathen/05230a.htm) of the seventh and eighth centuries thought about them. The icon seems to have been in some sort the channel through which the saint (../cathen/04171a.htm) was approached; it has an almost sacramental virtue in arousing sentiments of faith (../cathen/05752c.htm), love (../cathen/09397a.htm) and so on, in those who gazed upon it; through and by the icon God (../cathen/06608a.htm) worked miracles (../cathen/10338a.htm), the icon even seems to have had a kind of personality (../cathen/11727b.htm) of its own, inasmuch as certain pictures were specially efficacious for certain graces (../cathen/06689a.htm). Icons were crowned (../cathen/04380a.htm) with garlands, incensed (../cathen/07716a.htm), kissed (../cathen/08663a.htm). Lamps burned before them, hymns (../cathen/07595a.htm) were sung in their honour (../cathen/07462a.htm). They were applied to sick persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) by contact, set out in the path of a fire or flood to stop it by a sort of magic. In many prayers (../cathen/12345b.htm) of this time the natural inference from the words would be that the actual picture is addressed.

If so much reverence was paid to ordinary images "made with hands", how much more was given to the miraculous (../cathen/10338a.htm) ones "not made with hands" (*eikones acheiropoietai*). Of these there were many that had descended miraculously (../cathen/10338a.htm) from heaven (../cathen/07170a.htm), or — like the most famous of all at Edessa (../cathen/05282a.htm) — had been produced by our Lord Himself by impressing His face on a cloth. (The story of the Edessa (../cathen/05282a.htm) picture is the Eastern form of our Veronica legend). The Emperor Michael II (820-9), in his letter to Louis the Pious, describes the excesses of the imageworshippers:

“They have removed the holy cross from the churches and replaced it by images before which they burn incense (../cathen/07716a.htm).... They sing psalms before these images, prostrate themselves before them, implore their help. Many dress up images in linen garments and choose them as godparents for their children. Others who become monks (../cathen/10487b.htm), forsaking the old tradition — according to which the hair that is cut off is received by some distinguished person (../cathen/11726a.htm) — let it fall into the hands of some image. Some priests (../cathen/12406a.htm) scrape the paint (../cathen/11395a.htm) off images, mix it with the consecrated (../cathen/04276a.htm) bread (../cathen/01349d.htm) and wine (../cathen/01358a.htm) and give it to the faithful (../cathen/05769a.htm). Others place the body of the Lord in the hands of images from which it is taken by the communicants. Others again, despising the churches, celebrate Divine Service in private houses, using an image as an altar (Mansi (../cathen/09609c.htm), XIV, 417-22). ”

These are the words of a bitter Iconoclast (../cathen/07620a.htm), and should, no doubt, be received with caution. Nevertheless most of the practices described by the emperor can be established by other and quite unimpeachable evidence. For instance, St. Theodore of the Studion writes to congratulate an official of the court for having chosen a holy icon as godfather for his son (P.G., XCIX 962-3). Such excesses as these explain in part at least the Iconoclast (../cathen/07620a.htm) reaction of the eighth century. And the Iconoclast (../cathen/07620a.htm) storm produced at least one good result: the Seventh Ecumenical Synod (../cathen/11045a.htm) (Nicaea II, 787), which, while defending the holy images (../cathen/07625a.htm), explained the kind of worship that may lawfully and reasonably be given to them and discountenanced all extravagances. A curious story, that illustrates the length to which the worship of images had gone by the eighth century, is told in the "New Garden" (*Neon Paradeision — Pratum Spirituale*) of a monk (../cathen/10487b.htm) of Jerusalem (../cathen/08344a.htm), John Moschus (../cathen/10591a.htm) (d. 619). This work was long attributed to Sophronius of Jerusalem (../cathen/08344a.htm). In it

the author tells the story of an old monk (../cathen/10487b.htm) at Jerusalem (../cathen/08344a.htm) who was much tormented by temptations (../cathen/14504a.htm) of the flesh. At last the devil (../cathen/04764a.htm) promised him peace on condition that he would cease to honour (../cathen/07462a.htm) his picture of our Lady He promised, kept his word, and then began to suffer temptations (../cathen/14504a.htm) against faith (../cathen/05752c.htm). He consulted his abbot (../cathen/01015c.htm) who told him that he had better suffer the former evil (../cathen/05649a.htm) (apparently even give way to the temptation) "rather than cease to worship our Lord and God Jesus Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm) with His mother".

On the other hand, in Rome (../cathen/13164a.htm) especially, we find the position of holy images (../cathen/07625a.htm) explained soberly and reasonably. They are the books of the ignorant (../cathen/07648a.htm). This idea (../cathen/07630a.htm) is a favourite one of St. Gregory the Great (../cathen/06780a.htm) (d. 604). He writes to an Iconoclast (../cathen/07620a.htm) bishop (../cathen/02581b.htm), Serenus of Marseilles (../cathen/09715b.htm), who had destroyed the images in his diocese (../cathen/05001a.htm): "Not without reason has antiquity allowed the stories of saints (../cathen/04171a.htm) to be painted (../cathen/11395a.htm) in holy places. And we indeed entirely praise thee for not allowing them to be adored, but we blame thee for breaking them. For it is one thing to adore an image, it is quite another thing to learn from the appearance of a picture what we must adore. What books are to those who can read, that is a picture to the ignorant (../cathen/07648a.htm) who look at it; in a picture even the unlearned may see what example they should follow; in a picture they who know (../cathen/08673a.htm) no letters may yet read. Hence, for barbarians especially a picture takes the place of a book" (Ep. ix, 105, in P.L., LXXVII, 1027). But in the East, too, there were people who shared this more sober Western view. Anastasius, Bishop (../cathen/02581b.htm) of Theopolis (d. 609), who was a friend of St. Gregory (../cathen/06780a.htm) and translated his "Regula pastoralis" into Greek, expresses himself in almost the same way and makes the distinction between *proskynesis* and *latreia* that became so famous in Iconoclast (../cathen/07620a.htm) times: "We worship (*proskynoumen*) men and the holy angels (../cathen/01476d.htm); we do not adore (*latreuomen*) them. Moses says: Thou shalt worship thy God (../cathen/06608a.htm) and Him only shalt thou adore. Behold, before the word 'adore' he puts 'only', but not before the word 'worship', because it is lawful to worship [creatures], since worship is only giving special honour (../cathen/07462a.htm) (*times emphasis*), but it is not lawful to adore them nor by any means to give them prayers (../cathen/12345b.htm) of adoration (*proseuxasthai*)" (Schwarzlose, op. cit., 24).

Enemies of image-worship before Iconoclasm

Long before the outbreak in the eighth century there were isolated cases of persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) who feared the ever-growing cult of images and saw in it danger of a return to the old idolatry (../cathen/07636a.htm). We need hardly quote in this connection the invectives of the Apostolic Fathers (../cathen/01637a.htm) against idols (Athenagoras (../cathen/02042b.htm) *A Plea for the Christians* 15-17 (../fathers/0205.htm); Theophilus, "Ad Autolyicum" II; Minucius Felix (../cathen/10336a.htm), "Octavius", xxvii; Arnobius, "Disp. adv. Gentes"; Tertullian (../cathen/14520c.htm), "De Idololatria", I; Cyprian (../cathen/04583b.htm), "De idolorum vanitate"), in which they denounce not only the worship but even the manufacture and possession of such images. These texts all regard idols, that is, images made to be adored. But canon xxxvi of the Synod of Elvira is important. This was a general synod of the Church

(../cathen/03744a.htm) of Spain (../cathen/14169b.htm) held, apparently about the year 300, in a city near Granada (../cathen/06723a.htm). It made many severe laws (../cathen/09053a.htm) against Christians (../cathen/03712a.htm) who relapsed into idolatry (../cathen/07636a.htm), heresy (../cathen/07256b.htm), or sins (../cathen/14004b.htm) against the Sixth Commandment. The canon reads: "It is ordained (../cathen/11279a.htm) (Placuit) that Pictures are not to be in churches, so that that which is worshipped and adored shall not be painted (../cathen/11395a.htm) on walls." The meaning of the canon has been much discussed. Some have thought it was only a precaution against possible profanation by pagans (../cathen/11388a.htm) who might go into a church. Others see in it a law against pictures on principle. In any case the canon can have produced but a slight effect even in Spain (../cathen/14169b.htm), where there were holy pictures in the fourth century as in other countries. But it is interesting to see that just at the end of the first period there were some bishops (../cathen/02581b.htm) who disapproved of the growing cult of images. Eusebius of Caesarea (../cathen/05617b.htm) (d. 340), the Father of Church History, must be counted among the enemies of icons. In several places in his history he shows his dislike of them. They are a "heathen custom" (*ethnike synetheia Church History* VII.18 (../fathers/250107.htm)); he wrote many arguments to persuade Constantine's sister Constantia not to keep a statue (../cathen/13641b.htm) of our Lord (see Mansi XIII, 169). A contemporary bishop (../cathen/02581b.htm), Asterius of Amasia (../cathen/01380c.htm), also tried to oppose the spreading tendency. In a sermon on the parable (../cathen/11460a.htm) of the rich man and Lazarus he says: "Do not Paint pictures of Christ he humbled himself enough by becoming man." (Combefis, "Auctar. nov.", I, "Hom. iv in Div. et Laz."). Epiphanius of Salamis (../cathen/13393b.htm) (d. 403) tore down a curtain in a church in Palestine because it had a picture of Christ or a saint. The Arian (../cathen/01707c.htm) Philostorgius (fifth century) too was a forerunner of the Iconoclasts (../cathen/07620a.htm) (Hist. Eccl., II, 12; VII, 3), as also the Bishop (../cathen/02581b.htm) of Marseilles (../cathen/09715b.htm) (Serenus), to whom St. Gregory the Great (../cathen/06780a.htm) wrote his defence of pictures (see above). Lastly we may mention that in at least one province of the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) (Central Syria (../cathen/14399a.htm)) Christian art (../cathen/03710a.htm) developed to great perfection while it systematically rejected all representation of the human figure. These exceptions are few compared with the steadily increasing influence of images and their worship all over Christendom (../cathen/03699b.htm), but they serve to show that the holy icons did not win their place entirely without opposition, and they represent a thin stream of opposition as the antecedent of the virulent Iconoclasm (../cathen/07620a.htm) of the eighth century.

Images after Iconoclasm (coronation of images)

After the storm of the eighth and ninth centuries (see ICONOCLASM (../cathen/07620a.htm)), the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) throughout the world settled down again in secure possession of her images. Since their triumphant return on the Feast of Orthodoxy in 842, their position has not again been questioned by any of the old Churches. Only now the situation has become more clearly defined. The Seventh General Council (../cathen/11045a.htm) (Nicaea II, 787) had laid down the principles, established the theological (../cathen/14580x.htm) basis, restrained the abuses of image-worship. That council was accepted by the great Church of the five patriarchates (../cathen/11549a.htm) as equal to the other six. Without accepting its decrees no one could be a member of that

church, no one can today be Catholic (../cathen/03449a.htm) or Orthodox. Images and their cult had become an integral part of the Faith Iconoclasm (../cathen/07620a.htm) was now definitely a heresy (../cathen/07256b.htm) condemned by the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) as much as Arianism (../cathen/01707c.htm) or Nestorianism (../cathen/10755a.htm). The situation was not changed by the Great Schism of the ninth and eleventh centuries. Both sides still maintain the same principles in this matter; both equally revere as an oecumenical synod the last council in which they met in unison before the final calamity. The Orthodox agree to all that Catholics (../cathen/03449a.htm) say (see next Paragraph) as to the principle of venerating images. So do the old. Eastern schismatical (../cathen/13529a.htm) Churches. Although they broke away long before Iconoclasm (../cathen/07620a.htm) and Nicaea II they took with them then the principles we maintain — sufficient evidence that those principles were not new in 787. Nestorians (../cathen/10755a.htm), Armenians (../cathen/01736b.htm), Jacobites (../cathen/14417a.htm), Copts (../cathen/01300b.htm), and Abyssinians (../cathen/01075e.htm) fill their churches with holy icons, bow to them, incense (../cathen/07716a.htm) them, kiss (../cathen/08663a.htm) them, just as do the Orthodox.

But there is a difference not of principle but of practice between East and West, to which we have already alluded. Especially since Iconoclasm (../cathen/07620a.htm), the East dislikes solid statues (../cathen/13641b.htm). Perhaps they are too reminiscent of the old Greek gods. At all events, the Eastern icon (whether Orthodox, Nestorian (../cathen/10755a.htm) or Monophysite (../cathen/10489b.htm)) is always flat — a painting (../cathen/11395a.htm), mosaic (../cathen/10584a.htm), bas-relief (../cathen/02341a.htm). Some of the less intelligent Easterns even seem to see a question of principle in this and explain the difference between a holy icon, such as a Christian (../cathen/03712a.htm) man should venerate, and a detestable idol, in the simplest and crudest way: "icons are flat, idols are solid." However, that is a view that has never been suggested by their Church officially, she has never made this a ground of complaint against Latins, but admits it to be (as of course it is) simply a difference of fashion or habit, and she recognizes that we are justified by the Second Council of Nicaea (../cathen/11045a.htm) in the honour (../cathen/07462a.htm) we pay to our statues (../cathen/13641b.htm) just as she is in the far more elaborate reverence she pays to her flat icons.

In the West the exuberant use of statues (../cathen/13641b.htm) and pictures during the Middle Ages (../cathen/10285c.htm) is well known and may be seen in any cathedral (../cathen/03438a.htm) in which Protestant (../cathen/12495a.htm) zeal (../cathen/15753a.htm) has not destroyed the carving. In the East it is enough to go into any Orthodox Church (../cathen/11329a.htm) to see the crowd of holy icons that cover the walls, that gleam right across the church from the iconostasis. And the churches of the Eastern sects (../cathen/13674a.htm) that have no iconostasis show as many pictures in other places. As specimens of exceedingly beautiful and curious icons painted (../cathen/11395a.htm) after the Iconoclast troubles (../cathen/07620a.htm) at Constantinople, we may mention the mosaics (../cathen/10584a.htm) of the *Kahrie-Jami* (the old "Monastery in the Country", *Moue tes choras*) near the Adrianople gate. The Turks (../cathen/15097a.htm) by some accident have spared these mosaics (../cathen/10584a.htm) in turning the church into a mosque. They were put up by order of Andronicus II (1282-1328), they cover the whole church within, representing complete cycles of the events of our Lord's life, images of Him, His mother, and various saints (../cathen/04171a.htm); and still show in the desecrated (../cathen/04748c.htm) building an example of the splendid pomp with which the later Byzantine Church (../cathen/04312d.htm) carried out the principles of the Second Nicaean Council (../cathen/11045a.htm).

In both East and West the reverence we pay to images has crystallized into formal ritual. In the Latin Rite ([../cathen/09022a.htm](#)) the priest ([../cathen/12406a.htm](#)) is commanded to bow to the cross in the sacristy ([../cathen/13322b.htm](#)) before he leaves it to say Mass ([../cathen/10006a.htm](#)) ("Ritus servandus" in the Missal ([../cathen/10354c.htm](#)), II, 1); he bows again profoundly "to the altar or the image of the crucifix placed upon it" when he begins Mass (*ibid.*, II, 2); he begins incensing ([../cathen/07716a.htm](#)) the altar by incensing ([../cathen/07716a.htm](#)) the crucifix on it (IV, 4), and bows to it every time he passes it (*ibid.*); he also incenses ([../cathen/07716a.htm](#)) any relics ([../cathen/12734a.htm](#)) or images of saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) that may be on the altar (*ibid.*). In the same way many such commands throughout our rubrics ([../cathen/13216a.htm](#)) show that always a reverence is to be paid to the cross or images of saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) whenever we approach them. The Byzantine Rite shows if possible even more reverence for the holy icons. They must be arranged according to a systematic scheme across the screen between the choir and the altar that from this fact is called iconostasis *eikonostasis*, "picture-stand"; before these pictures, lamps are kept always burning. Among them on either side of the royal door, are those of our Lord and His Mother. As part of the ritual the celebrant and the deacon ([../cathen/04647c.htm](#)) before they go in to vest bow profoundly before these and say certain fixed prayers ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)): "We worship (*proskynoumen*) Thine immaculate image, O Christ" etc. ("Euchologion", Venice ([../cathen/15333a.htm](#)), 1898, p. 35); and they too throughout their services are constantly told to pay reverence to the holy icons. Images then were in possession and received worship all over Christendom ([../cathen/03699b.htm](#)) without question till the Protestant Reformers ([../cathen/12495a.htm](#)), true ([../cathen/15073a.htm](#)) to their principle of falling back on the Bible ([../bible](#)) only, and finding nothing about them in the New Testament ([../cathen/14530a.htm](#)), sought in the Old Law ([../cathen/10582c.htm](#)) rules that were never meant for the New Church and discovered in the First Commandment (which they called the second) a command not even to make any graven image. Their successors have gradually tempered the severity of this, as of many other of the original principles of their founders. Calvinists ([../cathen/03198a.htm](#)) keep the rule of admitting no statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)), not even a cross, fairly exactly still. Lutherans ([../cathen/09438b.htm](#)) have statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) and crucifixes. In Anglican ([../cathen/01498a.htm](#)) churches one may find any principle at work, from that of a bare cross to a perfect plethora of statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) and pictures.

The coronation ([../cathen/04380a.htm](#)) of images is an example of an old and obvious symbolic sign of honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) that has become a fixed rite. The Greek pagans ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)) offered golden crowns to their idols as specially worthy gifts. St. Irenæus ([../cathen/08130b.htm](#)) (d. 202) already notices that certain Christian ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)) (the Carpocratian Gnostics ([../cathen/06592a.htm](#))) crown their images. He disapproves of the practice, though it seems that part of his dislike at any rate is because they crown statues ([../cathen/13641b.htm](#)) of Christ alongside of those of Pythagoras, Plato ([../cathen/12159a.htm](#)), and Aristotle ([../cathen/01713a.htm](#)) ("Adv. omn. haer.", I, xxv). The offering of crowns to adorn images became a common practice in the Eastern Churches ([../cathen/05230a.htm](#)). In itself it would mean no more than adding such additional splendour to the icon as might also be given by a handsome gold frame. Then the affixing of the crown naturally attracted to itself a certain amount of ritual, and the crown itself, like all things dedicated to the use of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)), was blessed before it was affixed.

At Rome (../cathen/13164a.htm), too, a ceremony (../cathen/03538b.htm) evolved out of this pious (../cathen/12748a.htm) practice. A famous case is the coronation (../cathen/04380a.htm) of the picture of our Lady in St. Mary Major. Clement VIII (../cathen/04027a.htm) (1592-1605) presented crowns (one for our Lord and one for His Mother, both of whom are represented in the picture) to adorn it; so also did succeeding popes (../cathen/12260a.htm). These crowns were lost and Gregory XVI (../cathen/07006a.htm) (1831-46) determined to replace them. On 15 August, 1837 surrounded by cardinals (../cathen/03333b.htm) and prelates (../cathen/12386b.htm), he brought crowns, blessed them with a prayer (../cathen/12345b.htm) composed for the occasion, sprinkled them with holy water (../cathen/07432a.htm), and incensed (../cathen/07716a.htm) them. The "Regina Coeli" having been sung he affixed the crowns to the picture, saying the form — "Sicuti per manus nostras coronaris in terris, ita a te gloria et honore coronari mereamur in coelis" — for our Lord, and a similar form (per te a Jesu Christo Filio tuo . . .) for our Lady. There was another collect, the Te Deum (../cathen/14468c.htm), a last collect, and then High Mass *coram Pontifice*. The same day the pope (../cathen/12260a.htm) issued a Brief (../cathen/03052b.htm) (*Coelistis Regina*) about the rite. The crowns are to be kept by the canons of St. Mary Major. The ceremonial used on that occasion became a standard for similar functions.

The Chapter of St. Peter have a right (../cathen/13055c.htm) to crown statues (../cathen/13641b.htm) and pictures of our Lady since the seventeenth century. A certain Count Alexander Sforza-Pallavicini of Piacenza (../cathen/12069a.htm) set aside a sum of money to pay for crowns to be used for this purpose. The first case was in 1631, when the chapter, on 27 August, crowned (../cathen/04380a.htm) a famous picture, "Santa Maria della febbre", in one of the sacristies of St. Peter. The count paid the expenses. Soon after, at his death, by his will (dated 3 July, 1636) he left considerable property (../cathen/12462a.htm) to the chapter with the condition that they should spend the revenue on crowning famous pictures and statues (../cathen/13641b.htm) of our Lady. They have done so since. The procedure is that a bishop (../cathen/02581b.htm) may apply to the chapter to crown an image in his diocese (../cathen/05001a.htm). The canons consider his petition; if they approve it they have a crown made and send one of their number to carry out the ceremony (../cathen/03538b.htm). Sometimes the pope (../cathen/12260a.htm) himself has crowned (../cathen/04380a.htm) images for the chapter. In 1815 Pius VII (../cathen/12132a.htm) did so at Savona (../cathen/13489c.htm), and again in 1816 at Galloro near Castel Gandolfo. A list of images so crowned (../cathen/04380a.htm) down to 1792 was published in that year at Rome (../cathen/13164a.htm) (*Raccolta delle immagini della beata Vergine ornate della corona d'oro*). The chapter has an "Ordo servandus in tradendis coronis aureis quae donantur a Rmo Capitulo S. Petri de Urbe sacris imaginibus B.M.V." — apparently in manuscript (../cathen/09614b.htm) only. The rite is almost exactly that used by Gregory XVI (../cathen/07006a.htm) in 1837.

The principles of image-worship

Lastly something must be said about Catholic (../cathen/03449a.htm) principles concerning the worship of sacred images. The Latin *Cultus sacrarum imaginum* may quite well be translated (as it always was in the past) "worship of holy images", and "image-worshipper" is a convenient term for *cultor imaginum* — *eikonodoulos*, as opposed to *eikonoklastes* (image-breaker). Worship by no means implies only the supreme adoration that may be given only to God (../cathen/06608a.htm). It is a general word denoting some more or less high degree of reverence and honour (../cathen/07462a.htm), an

acknowledgment of worth, like the German *Verehrung* ("with my body I thee worship") in the marriage service; English city companies are "worshipful", a magistrate is "Your worship", and so on. We need not then hesitate to speak of our worship of images; though no doubt ([../cathen/05141a.htm](#)) we shall often be called upon to explain the term.

We note in the first place that the First Commandment (except inasmuch as it forbids adoration and service of images) does not affect us at all. The Old Law ([../cathen/10582c.htm](#)) — including the ten commandments — as far as it only promulgates ([../cathen/12454b.htm](#)) *natural* law is of course eternal. No possible circumstances can ever abrogate, for instance the Fifth, Sixth, and Seventh Commandments. On the other hand, as far as it is positive law, it was once for all abrogated by the promulgation ([../cathen/12454b.htm](#)) of the Gospel (Romans 8:1-2 ([../bible/rom008.htm#vrs1](#)); Galatians 3:23-5 ([../bible/gal003.htm#vrs23](#)), etc.; Acts 15:28-9 ([../bible/act015.htm#vrs28](#))). Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) are not bound to circumcise ([../cathen/03777a.htm](#)), to abstain from levitically unclean food and so on. The Third Commandment that ordered the Jews ([../cathen/08399a.htm](#)) to keep Saturday holy is a typical case of a positive law abrogated and replaced by another by the Christian Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)). So in the First Commandment we must distinguish the clauses — "Thou shalt not have strange gods before me", "Thou shalt not adore them nor serve them" — which are eternal natural law ([../cathen/09076a.htm](#)) (*prohibitum quia malum*), from the clause: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image", etc. In whatever sense the archaeologist may understand this, it is clearly not natural law ([../cathen/09076a.htm](#)), nor can anyone prove the inherent wickedness of making a graven thing; therefore it is Divine positive law (*malum quia prohibitum*) of the Old Dispensation ([../cathen/14526a.htm](#)) that no more applies to Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) than the law ([../cathen/09053a.htm](#)) of marrying one's brother's widow ([../cathen/15617c.htm](#)).

Since there is no Divine positive law in the New Testament ([../cathen/14530a.htm](#)) on the subject, Christians ([../cathen/03712a.htm](#)) are bound firstly by the natural law ([../cathen/09076a.htm](#)) that forbids us to give to any creature the honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) due to God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) alone, and forbids the obvious absurdity of addressing prayers ([../cathen/12345b.htm](#)) or any sort of absolute worship to a manufactured image; secondly, by whatever ecclesiastical laws may have been made on this subject by the authority of the Church ([../cathen/03744a.htm](#)) The situation was defined quite clearly by the Second Council of Nicaea ([../cathen/11045a.htm](#)) in 787. In its seventh session the Fathers drew up the essential decision (*horos*) of the synod. In this, after repeating the Nicene Creed ([../cathen/11049a.htm](#)) and the condemnation of former heretics ([../cathen/07256b.htm](#)), they come to the burning question of the treatment of holy images ([../cathen/07625a.htm](#)). They speak of real adoration, supreme worship paid to a being for its own sake only, acknowledgment of absolute dependence on some one who can grant favours without reference to any one else. This is what they mean by *latreia* and they declare emphatically that this kind of worship must be given to God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) only. It is sheer idolatry ([../cathen/07636a.htm](#)) to pay *latreia* to any creature at all. In Latin, *adoratio* is generally (though not always; see e.g. in the Vulgate ([../cathen/15515b.htm](#)), 2 Samuel 1:2 ([../bible/2sa001.htm#vrs2](#)), etc.) used in this sense. Since the council especially there is a tendency to restrict it to this sense only, so that *adorare sanctos* certainly now sounds scandalous ([../cathen/13506d.htm](#)). So in English by *adoration* we now always understand the *latreia* of the Fathers of the Second Nicaean Council. From this adoration the council distinguishes respect and honourable reverence (*aspasmos kaitimetike proskynesis*) such as may be paid to any venerable or great person—the emperor, patriarch, and so on. A fortiori may and should such reverence be paid to the saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) who reign with God

(../cathen/06608a.htm). The words *proskynesis* (as distinct from *latreia*) and *douleia* became the technical ones for this inferior honour (../cathen/07462a.htm). *Proskynesis* (which oddly enough means etymologically the same thing as *adoratio* — *ad* + *os*, *kynein*, to kiss (../cathen/08663a.htm)) corresponds in Christian (../cathen/03712a.htm) use to the Latin *veneratio*; *douleia* would generally be translated *cultus*. In English we use *veneration*, *reverence*, *cult*, *worship* for these ideas (../cathen/07630a.htm).

This reverence will be expressed in signs determined by custom and etiquette. It must be noted that all outward marks of respect are only arbitrary signs, like words, and that signs have no inherent necessary (../cathen/10733a.htm) connotation. They mean what it is agreed and understood that they shall mean. It is always impossible to maintain that any sign or word must necessarily signify some one idea (../cathen/07630a.htm). Like flags these things have come to mean what the people who use them intend them to mean. Kneeling in itself means no more than sitting. In regard then to genuflections, kisses (../cathen/08663a.htm), incense (../cathen/07716a.htm) and such signs paid to any object or person (../cathen/11726a.htm) the only reasonable standard is the understood intention of the people who use them. Their greater or less abundance is a matter of etiquette that may well differ in different countries. Kneeling especially by no means always connotes supreme adoration. People for a long time knelt (../cathen/06423a.htm) to kings. The Fathers of Nicaea II further distinguish between *absolute* and *relative* worship. Absolute worship is paid to any person (../cathen/11726a.htm) for his own sake. Relative worship is paid to a sign, not at all for its own sake, but for the sake of the thing signified. The sign in itself is nothing, but it shares the honour (../cathen/07462a.htm) of its prototype. An insult to the sign (a flag or statue (../cathen/13641b.htm)) is an insult to the thing of which it is a sign; so also we honour (../cathen/07462a.htm) the prototype by honouring the sign. In this case all the outward marks of reverence, visibly directed towards the sign, turn in intention towards the real object of our reverence — the thing signified. The sign is only put UP as a visible direction for our reverence, because the real thing is not physically present. Every one knows the use of such signs in ordinary life. People salute flags, bow to empty thrones, uncover to statues (../cathen/13641b.htm) and so on, nor does any one think that this reverence is directed to coloured bunting or wood and stone.

It is this relative worship that is to be paid to the cross, images of Christ and the saints (../cathen/04171a.htm), while the intention directs it all really to the persons (../cathen/11726a.htm) these things represent. The text then of the decision of the seventh session of Nicaea II is: "We define (*orizomen* with all certainty (../cathen/03539b.htm) and care that both the figure of the sacred and lifegiving Cross, as also the venerable and holy images (../cathen/07625a.htm), whether made in colours or mosaic (../cathen/10584a.htm) or other materials, are to be placed suitably in the holy churches of God (../cathen/06608a.htm), on sacred vessels (../cathen/01357e.htm) and vestments, on walls and pictures, in houses and by roads; that is to say, the images of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm), of our immaculate Lady the holy Mother of God (../cathen/15464b.htm), of the honourable angels (../cathen/01476d.htm) and all saints (../cathen/04171a.htm) and holy men. For as often as they are seen in their pictorial representations, people who look at them are ardently lifted up to the memory and love (../cathen/09397a.htm) of the originals and induced to give them respect and worshipful honour (../cathen/07462a.htm) (*aspasmon kaitimetiken proskynesin* but not real adoration (*alethinēn latreian*) which according to our faith (../cathen/05752c.htm) is due only to the Divine Nature. So that offerings of incense (../cathen/07716a.htm) and lights are to be given to these as to the figure of the sacred and lifegiving Cross, to the holy Gospel-books and other sacred objects in order to do them honour (../cathen/07462a.htm), as was the pious

(../cathen/12748a.htm) custom of ancient times. For honour (../cathen/07462a.htm) paid to an image passes on to its prototype; he who worships (*ho proskynon*) an image worships the reality of him who is painted (../cathen/11395a.htm) in it" (Mansi (../cathen/09609c.htm), XIII, pp. 378-9; Harduin, IV, pp. 453-6).

That is still the standpoint of the Catholic (../cathen/03449a.htm) Church (../cathen/03744a.htm). The question was settled for us by the Seventh Œcumenical Council; nothing has since been added to that definition. The customs by which we show our "respect and worshipful honour (../cathen/07462a.htm)" for holy images (../cathen/07625a.htm) naturally vary in different countries and at different times. Only the authority of the Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) has occasionally stepped in, sometimes to prevent a spasmodic return to Iconoclasm (../cathen/07620a.htm), more often to forbid excesses of such signs of reverence as would be misunderstood and give scandal (../cathen/13506d.htm).

The Schoolmen (../cathen/13548a.htm) discussed the whole question at length. St. Thomas (../cathen/14663b.htm) declares what idolatry (../cathen/07636a.htm) is in the "Summa Theologica", II-II:94 (../summa/3094.htm#article0), and explains the use of images in the Catholic (../cathen/03449a.htm) Church (../cathen/03744a.htm) (II-II:94:2, ad 1Um (../summa/3094.htm#article2)). He distinguishes between *latria* and *dulia* (II-II:103 (../summa/3103.htm#article0)). The twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent (../cathen/15030c.htm) (Dec., 1563) repeats faithfully the principles of Nicaea II:

*“[The holy Synod commands] that images of Christ ([../cathen/08374c.htm](#)), the Virgin Mother of God ([../cathen/15464b.htm](#)), and other saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) are to be held and kept especially in churches, that due honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) and reverence (*debitum honorem et venerationem*) are to be paid to them, not that any divinity or power is thought to be in them for the sake of which they may be worshipped, or that anything can be asked of them, or that any trust may be put in images, as was done by the heathen ([../cathen/11388a.htm](#)) who put their trust in their idols [Psalm 134:15 sqq. ([../bible/psa134.htm#vrs15](#))], but because the honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) shown to them is referred to the prototypes which they represent, so that by kissing ([../cathen/08663a.htm](#)), uncovering to, kneeling before images we adore Christ and honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) the saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) whose likeness they bear (Denzinger ([../cathen/04736b.htm](#)), no. 986). ”*

As an example of contemporary Catholic teaching ([../cathen/05075b.htm](#)) on this subject one could hardly quote anything better expressed than the "Catechism of Christian Doctrine" used in England ([../cathen/05445a.htm](#)) by command of the Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) bishops ([../cathen/02581b.htm](#)). In four points, this book sums up the whole Catholic ([../cathen/03449a.htm](#)) position exactly:

- "It is forbidden to give divine honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) or worship to the angels ([../cathen/01476d.htm](#)) and saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) for this belongs to God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#)) alone."
- "We should pay to the angels ([../cathen/01476d.htm](#)) and saints ([../cathen/04171a.htm](#)) an inferior honour ([../cathen/07462a.htm](#)) or worship, for this is due to them as the servants and special friends of God ([../cathen/06608a.htm](#))."

- "We should give to relics (../cathen/12734a.htm), crucifixes and holy pictures a relative honour (../cathen/07462a.htm), as they relate to Christ (../cathen/08374c.htm) and his saints (../cathen/04171a.htm) and are memorials of them."
- "We do not pray (../cathen/12345b.htm) to relics (../cathen/12734a.htm) or images, for they can neither see nor hear nor help us."

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